

The Europeans - Why they left and why it matters

Our story begins in 15th and early 16th century Europe - with an understanding of the English who eventually decide to immigrate to the "New World."

- What have you previously learned about why the English left England to migrate to North America?
- Did the "Medieval Lives" videos give you any new ideas about why the English may have immigrated?

The Europeans - Why they left and why it matters

Discussion Goals

1. To review the geopolitical realities of Europe in the Middle Ages.
2. To understand the political, social, and economic systems of feudalism and emerging mercantilism in 15th, 16th, and 17th century Europe.
3. To examine the realities of everyday life in 15th, 16th, and 17th century Europe.
4. To explore the changing role of religion in 16th century Europe and how it impacted European immigration to the "New World."
5. To discuss why some Europeans were willing to leave their homelands in exchange for the uncertainties of life in North America.
6. To address the question, "why does any of this matter?"

Goal #1: To review the geopolitical realities of Europe in the Middle Ages

Access the power point presentation: "[A Geopolitical Understanding of Medieval Europe](#)"

Goal #2: To understand the political, social, and economic systems of feudalism and emerging mercantilism in 15th, 16th, and 17th century Europe

This story - adapted in part from Joanna Brooks *Why We Left* (2013) - begins with understanding the lives of English peasants in the 15th century. Before the end of the century, peasants had some sense of economic independence through their relationship to the land. Many lived on ten to thirty acres of land - land that was owned by the king but entrusted to one of his lords to whom they peasants paid rent. In exchange for the rent - usually paid for in crops and/or services - peasants had some common rights to graze stock, cut wood, draw water, or grow crops on the lord's land. Such common rights gave the peasants **some economic independence**. They grew their own crops; grazed animals and used their wastes to fertilize their gardens and provide milk, butter, and cheese not only for their use, but also to sell; and they used the lord's forests for firewood, fruits and nut, game and fish. This was the system of **feudalism**.

During the 15th century, **feudalism was a political, social, and economic system in which every man was bound to every other man by mutual ties of loyalty and service.**

- It involved a strict hierarchy of rank, where every person knew his place - the lord and knight to his king and the peasant to his landlord to whom he owed service and from whom he received his land and orders to work the land.
- Its goal was to preserve these relationships forever - thus ensuring that those at the bottom of the social network had little to no upward mobility.

In the 1500s, a type of feudal pyramid existed that described the social/political/economic power structure of medieval society:

- At the top was the **King** who claimed ownership of all the land.
- Second were the **nobles or landlords** to whom the King granted land. Nobles swore to serve and protect the King.
- Third were the **knights or vassals** who were less powerful military men and to whom the King also granted land in exchange for fighting for the king in case of war.
- At the bottom were the **peasants** who were directly responsible to the noble and knights who owned the land.

The pyramid can be altered by adding the most powerful person in Europe during this time to the top of the pyramid - the **Pope**.

By the late 15th and early 16th centuries, the old feudal order was changing - especially in England. The King, as well as his nobles and knights, were less interested in the old relationships whereby land and agriculture were the heart and soul of the economy. Land no longer was viewed as "an anchoring relationship embedded in a set of land use rights" (Brooks: 23). Instead, a whole new economic system developed around capital and commercialism.

At the same time, England's population was dramatically increasing. From an estimated population of 2.5 million in 1520, there were 5 million English men and women in 1680. Further, its cities experienced huge population increases, from 50,000 in the 1520s to 400,000 by 1650.

What resulted was a profound economic transformation whereby the King allowed his nobles and knights to convert their lands and **lease** them for progressive "improvement" so that they could use the profits from the new leases to finance commercial, industrial, and colonial ventures.

The consequences were dramatic:

- The landlords', knights', and peasants' relationship to the land dramatically changed.
 - Peasants no longer had control over a plot of land and instead, had to enter into a lease holding agreement in which they became tenants at the will of their landlord.
 - Peasants were evicted from their newly converted lands and through the leases, became "free" wage laborers.
 - In 1560, about 25 percent of all English households were headed by wage laborers; by 1620, 40 percent of all households were headed by wage laborers.
 - Wage laborers looking for jobs helped the English population shift from the rural countryside to congested cities.
- The land changed through various economic "improvements."
 - One of the major improvements was **enclosure** - turning land that traditionally had been used for public use and farming into fenced, private pasture land - especially for sheep to fuel the growing wool industry.
 - Enclosure brought about a modern idea - the private ownership of land.
 - In the 16th century, about 4 percent of open fields land was enclosed; by the 17th century, 50 percent of such land was enclosed.
 - Marshes, bogs, and wetlands were drained to provide more land for improvement, thereby impacting the seasonal flows of water and decreasing or destroying the fish, duck, geese, birds, otters, frogs, and fox populations.
 - Forests were cut down to increase pastureland for profit and to build the ships needed for the new commercial economy, further impacting populations of mammals and birds. Naval historian G. J. Marcus explained that for each naval ship built in 17th century England, it took about 2,000 oak trees that were at least 150 years old. Thus, each ship would have caused the clear cutting of at least 100 acres of forest. (Marcus, 1961:32) A survey of oaks in six royal forests found that between 1608 and 1783, 75 percent of the English oaks disappeared. (Brooks:70)
 - Coal-mining industries grew exponentially from 200,000 tons in 1530 to 1.5 million tons in 1630, thereby transforming the face of the land and polluting both the water and air.
- A new "permanent proletariat" of landless laborers arose in England.
 - By the 17th century, 50-70 percent of the English population were landless laborers (compared with 10-20 percent during the 16th century.)
 - These landless laborers comprised a new class of economic migrants - men and families - who had to move long distances to search for work in industrial and urban areas. In some cases, they moved into the forest which became "zones of disorder and lawlessness." (Brooks: 287)
- **Mercantilism** - the belief that the nation, not the individuals within it, was the principal actor in the economy - became the economic foundation of the English economy. The goal of the economy, then, should be to increase the nation's wealth - largely through acquiring gold and silver - rather than increasing the wealth of individuals.
 - Merchants believed that the world's wealth was finite and that one nation could only grow rich at the expense of another. Therefore, the nation's economic health was dependent upon extracting and importing wealth from foreign lands and exporting very little wealth from home.
 - To meet their needs, merchants sought assistance from the king who, in turn, benefited from the expansion of foreign trade.
 - Some merchants joined forces and formed chartered companies - or **corporations**. Each corporation acquired a charter from the King. The charter gave the corporation a monopoly on trading in a particular region.
- The social, political, and economic fabric of English society was disrupted and consequently, inequality greatly increased. The goal of both the King and the financial backers who owned the corporations was to make profit for the nation and for its investors - not to provide a stable social, political, and economic relationship between landowners and peasants.
- A new belief arose that the betterment of the individual was more important than the betterment of the larger community. In short, it created a new consumer society in which "the possession of goods (rather than inherited status, or connection to a community or a place) would play a significant role in establishing the social position of the individual." (Brooks: 98)

The "bottom line" - the social, political, and economic lives of the vast majority of English men and women were dramatically changed by the end of feudalism and the origin of mercantilism.

Goal #3: To examine the realities of everyday life in 15th, 16th, and 17th century Europe

- Social, political, and economic inequality due to feudalism.
- Fragile food supply and famine.

- Poor health and the spread of infectious diseases.
- Uncertain economy.
- Overpopulation.
- Dangerous standards of living in urban and rural areas.
- Child victimization.
- Intolerance.
- Warfare.
- An idealistic image of the "New World."

Social, political, and economic inequality. Because life was socially and economically stratified, the peasants had little chance to improve their standard of living. They were completely dependent upon the upper class - their landlords and monarchs - to determine the laws, modes of protection, rents, and wages. Life was especially difficult for women and children of all classes and economic groups. Women had few if any rights. One exception - as seen in the video "Medieval Lives: The Peasant" - indicates that between 10th and 13th centuries, Welsh women had the right to divorce their husbands for "stinking breath."

Inequality was especially seen in the common law practice of **primogeniture** - the principle of inheritance, in which the firstborn male child received all or his parents' most significant and valuable property upon their death.

- *Do you believe that the "feudal burden" to his king and his lord was little more than slavery?*

Fragile food supply and famine. While almost 90% of Europeans made their living from the land, about 1/5 of the landlords owned enough land to feed themselves. Hunger was a constant companion to the majority of people. Additionally, warfare, bad weather, poor transportation, and low grain yields forced Europeans to face the constant prospect of food shortages. Further, the slightest fluctuation in prices could cause the sudden deaths of additional tens of thousands who lived on the margins of perpetual hunger.

Poor health and the spread of infectious diseases. Infectious diseases and poor health care were directly responsible for high mortality rates. A third of all children died before reaching age five; half died before reaching the age of 10. Less than half the population reached adulthood.

- **Poor health and poor health care were the norm among Europeans.** Because most people never bathed within their lifetime, all places of human and animal habitation gave off vile aromas. Almost everyone had a brush with smallpox and other deforming diseases, leaving survivors partially blind, pockmarked, or crippled. On the other hand, it is now believed that the poor had better dental health than previously assumed - largely because they had a coarse diet that kept their teeth healthy and they ate virtually no sugar. (See "[Medieval Lives: the Peasant](#)")
- **Women's health was especially precarious** given the fact that during their 15 most fertile years, the vast majority of women were about to become pregnant, were pregnant, or were about to give birth. On an average, women had 7-8 pregnancies, with only 3 or 4 children surviving to age 10. Despite pregnancies and births, women had to perform their traditional tasks.
- **Disease was rampant.** Between 1347 and 1353, a widespread epidemic of bubonic plague, or Black Death, swept through Europe from Asia. Within six years, the plague had killed about one-third of Europe's population. Cities were especially hit hard; in 1348, Florence lost between 50-75% of its entire population.

An uncertain economy. Throughout Europe, the economy was uncertain at best. At its worst, it triggered poverty.

- The **Black Death** triggered a massive depression through its disruption of agriculture and commerce. The 15th Century recovery temporarily stimulated the economy but by the end of the century when mercantilism was saving one small segment of the population, the vast majority of Europeans faced a steady decline in the quality of their lives.
- Massive inflation resulted - prices doubled at the end of the century and quadrupled between 1520 and 1590.
- A pioneering study of English society conducted at the end of the 17th Century estimated that half of the population lived at or below the poverty line.

Overpopulation. Before 1450, over 90% of Europe's population lived in small rural communities - the vast majority who lived a life of unremitting labor. Within a century, there was not enough land to meet the needs of all the people. The population throughout Europe, but especially in England, was exploding. Consequently, rural areas were overcrowded, and the cities became even more overcrowded and dangerous.

- 1500 = European population was about 75 million
- 1520 = England's population was about 2.5 million; by 1550, it was 3 million; by 1600, it was 4 million; and by 1680, it was 5 million

Dangerous standards of living in urban and rural areas. Due to the overpopulation problem, rural areas were overcrowded, and the cities became even more overcrowded and dangerous. As one famous Russian traveler - Peter the Great - noted in 1698:

"London ... was rich, vital, dirty and dangerous. The narrow streets were piled with garbage and filth which could be dropped freely from any overhanging window. Even the main avenues were dark and airless because greedy builders, anxious to gain more space, had projected upper stories out over the street. Through these ... alleys, crowds of Londoners

jostled and pushed one another. Traffic congestion was monumental. Lines of carriages and hackney cabs cut deep ruts into the streets so that passengers inside were tossed about, arriving breathless, nauseated and sometime bruised. When two coaches met in narrow street, fearful arguments ensued ... London was a violent city with coarse, cruel pleasures which quickly crushed the unprotected innocent. For women, the age of consent was twelve (it remained twelve in England until 1885). Crimes were common and in some parts of the city people could not sleep for the cries of 'Murder!' rising from the streets. Public floggings were a popular sight, and executions drew vast crowds. On 'Hanging Day,' workmen, shopkeepers and apprentices left their jobs to jam the streets, joking and laughing, and hoping to catch a glimpse of the condemned's face. Wealthy ladies and gentlemen paid for places in windows and balconies overlooking the route from Newgate Prison to Tyburn, where executions took place ... The most ghastly execution was the penalty for treason: hanging, drawing and quartering. The condemned man was strung up until he was almost dead from strangulation, then cut down, disemboweled while still alive, beheaded, and his trunk was then chopped into quarters. Sports were heavily stained with blood. Crowds paid to see bulls and bears set upon by enraged mastiffs; often the teeth of the bear had been filed down and the cornered beast could only swat with his great paws at the mastiffs that leaped and tore at him. Cockfights attracted gamblers, and large purses were wagered on the specially trained fowl.".... Robert K. Massie, *Peter the Great*, pp. 212-13

Child victimization. In addition to outrageous mortality rates for European children due to exposure, disease, and malnutrition, poor children were also victims of abandonment, slavery, and infanticide. To relieve overcrowding in homes, English parents often sent their children to live as servants where many often became victims of assault, rape, and even murder.

- In Spain, thousands upon thousands of children who could not be cared for were simply left to die on dung heaps or placed in road side ditches. (Standard, 1992:61)
- The 14th and 15th Century slave trade had a huge market for children who were as expensive to purchase as adults. East European children were in high demand, as were those European girls of childbearing age.

Intolerance. Europeans were intolerant of non-Catholic religions, of people who were different, and of the poor.

- **Religious intolerance.** There was no notion of religious toleration in Europe during this era. Every European nation had an established church that mandated what form of religious worship and belief were acceptable.
 - It was widely believed that public order was dependent on everyone believing the same thing about religion and practicing the same religious lifestyles. There was literally no thought of religion being a matter of private choice.
 - Anyone who challenged the mandated form of religious worship faced persecution by both church authorities and the government that supported the church.
 - The challengers to Catholicism were particularly persecuted in 15th Century Spain - resulting in two events: The Spanish Inquisition and the expulsion of Jews.
 - **The Spanish Inquisition.** Around 1480, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand established a religious court known as the **Spanish Inquisition**. Its **proceedings** were motivated by politics as well as religious (i.e., Catholic) beliefs. The court's proceedings were conducted with great severity. To extract information and confessions from defendants and witnesses, as well as to kill the condemned, the Inquisition used methods now considered barbaric, but which were used in most courts of the time: hanging on the gallows, burning at the stake, stretching on the rack, beheading, flaying alive, and drawing and quartering. Its severity was relaxed in the 17th Century and the Spanish Inquisition was finally abolished in 1834. Estimates of those executed for heresy - beliefs or opinions that disagreed with Catholic doctrine - during the three-and-a-half centuries range from 4,000 to 30,000.
 - **The Expulsion of the Spanish Jews.** On the day Columbus sailed on his historic journey, the port of the city from which he sailed was filled with ships that were deporting Jews from Spain. In April, 1492, King Ferdinand issued an **Edict** in which he declared that no Jews were permitted to remain within the kingdom of Spain; however, any Jew who was willing to convert to Catholicism could remain. By the time the expulsion was complete, somewhere between 120,000 and 150,000 Jews had all their valuables confiscated and were then forcibly removed from their homes. One contemporary described the scene: It was pitiful to see their sufferings. Many were consumed by hunger, especially nursing mothers and their babies. Half-dead mothers held dying children in their arms...I can hardly say how cruelly and greedily they were treated by those who transported them. Many were drowned by the avarice of the sailors, and those who were unable to pay their passage sold their children". (As quoted in David Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 1992:62.)
- **Intolerance of those who were different.** As the historian Lawrence Stone has noted about 16th Century England, its villages were places "filled with malice and hatred, its only unifying bond being the occasional episode of mass hysteria, which temporarily bound together the majority in order to harry and persecute the local witch." (Stone, 1977:98-99)

- The 16th Century witnessed a continent-wide witch-hunt. Communities, under direct guidance from the church, persecuted women who were most often unmarried or widowed. Between 1550-1650, in Germany, over 30,000 persecutions of alleged witches occurred.
- In 16th century Switzerland, people in one small, remote area killed 3,300 people for allegedly satanic crimes.
- And in Wiesensteig, Germany 63 women - alleged witches - were burned to death in one year. (Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Inquiry Inspired by the Great Witch Hunt*. NY: Basic Books, 1975:254.)
- And who were these witches - women who did not adhere to the social, political, spiritual, and or economic status quo.
- **Intolerance of the poor.** As poverty became more widespread throughout Europe, communities became less tolerant of their lot. This was especially the case in England which, by the 17th century, saw three new developments in English policy on the poor:
 - Behaviors of the poor that had been somewhat acceptable under feudalism - gathering wood, pulling wool from sheep's back, pocketing a bit of grain - became criminalized.
 - The landless poor who traveled throughout England looking for work were looked upon as a social threat and a social problem. Thus, The Poor Act of 1598 defined migratory workers as a social threat and an economic liability to England. These "threats" and "problems" could - and were - be arrested and put in jail.
 - England began to make wage laborers out of the poor and put them to work building public projects.

Warfare. Largely as a result of the reformation, religious warfare became a regular feature of 16th Century Europe.

Additionally, political and economic warfare wracked the continent. The most celebrated of these conflicts involved Spain and England in a religious, political, and economic battle.

- Ever since Henry VIII of England divorced his Spanish wife, Catherine of Aragon in 1527, tensions ran high between the monarchies. The staunchly Catholic Spanish monarchy wasted no time in denouncing the now Protestant England. The affronts remained verbal until the rule of Elizabeth.
- In the 1570s, Philip II of Spain, Elizabeth's brother-in-law and avid critic, sent 20,000 soldiers to the Netherlands to root out Protestantism. To counter the nearby threat, Elizabeth provided secret aid to Protestant rebels who supported a revolt against Spanish rule.
- In 1577, after formally allying herself with the Dutch, Elizabeth secretly authorized Francis Drake to attack Spanish ships in an area reserved in an earlier treaty (Treaty of Tordesillas) for Spain. Drake raided Spanish ships of their gold and silver and was consequently awarded a knighthood for his deeds.
- The situation was exacerbated in 1585 when Elizabeth sent 6,000 men across the Channel to aid the Dutch rebels and in 1586 when Drake continued to loot Spanish ships at sea and Spanish settlements in Santo Domingo and Cartagena.
- By the 1580s, Spain was still the most powerful and wealthy power in Europe - due primarily to its enormous inflow of wealth from the Americas. However, England and France were beginning to assert claims to the New World - and area where Spain had much to lose from English and French colonization.
- Thus, in 1585, Philip decided to invade England and immediately set out to create the largest marine force that the world had yet witnessed. In the spring of 1588, his armada of 132 warships carrying over 3,000 cannons and an invasion force of 30,000 men set out for England. In July, the Spanish Armada met English captains in the English Channel who had more maneuverable ships and also had to face a major storm. Half the Spanish ships were destroyed; their crews were killed or captured. Nonetheless, the war continued until 1604 when it became clear that the Spanish monopoly over the Americans had been broken.

An idealistic image of the "New World." Amid all these negative factors was one optimistic kernel of hope. Beginning in 1516 with Thomas More's publication of *Utopia* about an idealistic imaginary island in the Western Hemisphere, some Europeans had an image of the New World where settlers could escape from the miseries of Europe and where they might experience some degree of freedom.

- The prevailing notion of freedom was that only those who controlled their own labor, which usually meant those who owned their own land, were truly free. Those who worked for wages were associated with servility and were not believed to be free.
- Thus, only a very few men - kings and their nobles who owned land - had any sense of personal freedom or individual identity.
- The image of the New World increasingly became one of a unique place of economic opportunity where the English laboring classes could find economic independence by acquiring land.

Discussion:

- *What else about feudalism did you learn by watching the three required "Medieval Lives" videos - "The Peasant," "The King," and "The Damsel?"*
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Goal #4: To understand the changing role of religion in 16th century Europe and how it impacted European immigration to the "New World"

Religions and religious affiliations have been evolving for thousands of years. In the last 2000 years, since the beginning of Christianity, we have witnessed many changes in religion - many of which have led to conflict and even war. To get a good idea of spread of religion over the past 5,000 years, consult this overview - <http://www.mapsofwar.com/ind/history-of-religion.html>]

- For about 1,500 years, Christians in Western Europe mostly belonged to the Roman Catholic Church which was centered in Rome. The church was a major political and military power in Western Europe. The pope, as head of the church, was the spiritual leader and his views on religious doctrine were regarded as final. Consequently, popes used their power to defend and expand the church's influence and wealth.
- Between 110 and 1500, the Church and the popes increased their power and control over the lives of Europeans by requiring tithes, taxes, church fees, and payments to support numerous clergymen. Those who could not pay their debts to the church were threatened with excommunication - the church would deny them the sacraments and other "works" necessary for saving their souls.
- Catholic priests were also very powerful in the lives of everyday Europeans. They led their congregations along the right path to understanding and discovering God's will through sermons, holding confessions, and celebrating Holy Mass. If anyone was going astray, it was the priest's job to bring them back to God. The priest, in short, interpreted the Bible and God's word for the people.
- Europeans Catholics were expected to observe the sacraments, confess their sins to priests, and perform various religious "works" as defined by their priests to assure their place in heaven.

This was the status of religion in Europe at the beginning of the 16th century. But it was greatly complicated by the political status in Europe. At the beginning of the 16th century, the political power of the kings was increasing in most Western European nations. As we have already learned, much of Europe was fragmented into many German principalities, duchies and cities, known collectively as the Holy Roman Empire.

- The Holy Roman Emperor tried to impose his authority over the Germans, but they remained largely independent.
- As the Catholic Church grew in power, and as the power of ambitious popes increased, many Germans believed the church took advantage of them.
- Germans complained that the church impoverished the common people while enriching Rome and many felt the church was more interested in wealth and power than in the spiritual needs of the people.
- Despite their grievances against the Roman Catholic Church, few people spoke out for fear of being excommunicated, or even burned at the stake as a heretic.
- Into this atmosphere of fear stepped a man who challenged the authority of the Roman Catholic Church and brought about the end of Christian unity in Western Europe - Martin Luther, an obscure Catholic priest who lived in northern Germany and who changed the face of Europe forever.

Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation. The Catholic Church had taught Luther that people received salvation through their faith in God and their own good works on earth. But Luther felt he, and most ordinary people, were incapable of leading the kind of life that merited salvation. Luther turned to the Bible and gradually became convinced that God did not require men and women to earn salvation, but rather that salvation came by faith alone. Once people believed they had such faith, moral behavior was possible and salvation was inevitable

By 1517, Luther was especially troubled by an increasingly popular church practice - the selling of indulgences - a donation to the church that Catholics paid after confessing their sins to a priest and doing an assigned act of devotion. The payment was made in place of punishment for sins and secured forgiveness and a swift entry into heaven upon death. Over time, it even became possible to purchase an indulgence for the dead. The Dominican Friar John Tetzel, who was in charge of selling indulgences in Germany, used this popular advertising slogan to sell indulgences: "As soon as coin in coffer rings the soul from purgatory springs."

On October 31, 1517, Luther nailed a copy of his "[Ninety-Five Theses](#)" to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg, Germany. The Theses all related to Luther's dispute over the sale of indulgences. Word of Luther's Theses spread throughout the crowd that day and soon, many people called for their translation into German. A student copied Luther's Latin text and then translated the document and sent it to the university press; from there it spread throughout Germany. Later, Luther wrote a [letter to the Archbishop of Mainz](#) protesting indulgences and explaining his criticisms of other church practices.

After receiving Luther's letter, the archbishop sent it to Pope Leo X. Before the pope could react, however, the "Ninety-Five Theses" became a sensation among the German people who were stunned that Luther had challenged the pope and the church. Luther took full advantage of the newest technology in Europe to inform Germans of his ideas - movable type printing press developed by Johann Gutenberg. He and other pamphleteers who were increasingly called **Protestants** began publishing a steady stream of pamphlets criticizing the church. **The Protestant Reformation had begun and soon began to [spread throughout Europe](#).** Protestants argued for the following reforms:

- priests should marry and have children;

- the number of sacraments should be reduced;
- Catholic mass should be held in German instead of Latin;
- priests should not live like parasites off the common people by avoiding hard work and not having to pay taxes; and
- the people themselves should choose their own priests and decide how they believed based upon their own reading of the Bible

In January 1521, Pope Leo threatened to excommunicate Luther, but because he had become a hero to so many Germans, he instead agreed to summon him to an assembly of German nobles headed by the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. There, all his books and pamphlets were piled before Luther. After he admitted to writing them, he was asked to recant and subsequently refused. Charles declared Luther a heretic and an outlaw of the Holy Roman Empire. Luther then went into hiding for a year when he wrote and published more pamphlets criticizing the church and began translating the New Testament into German so all literate persons could read the word of God for themselves. He returned to Wittenberg in 1522 and continued to preach the first Protestant religion known as Lutheranism. He died at the age of 63 in 1546.

During the 1520s, disputes arose between Luther and other Protestants over many religious issues. For instance, the issue of whether or not infants should be baptized caused a formal split, with those disagreeing with Luther becoming known as the Anabaptists - those against infant baptism. One of the biggest splits was between Luther and John Calvin.

John Calvin and Calvinism. Calvin, a Frenchman, believed that because man was helpless before an all-powerful God, there was no such thing as free will. Thus, man was predestined for either Heaven or Hell and could do nothing to alter his fate. He argued that while good works were not required to go to Heaven - as the Catholic Church decreed - good works did serve a purpose by acting as a divine sign that the individual was making the best of their life on earth. He further argued that some people had been "called" by God to do a certain thing on earth. Some men and women who seemed ill-fitted for life on earth were greedy, lazy and immoral. Others, however, were called - they seemed to work happily in their lifetime and accomplished a great deal. These people woke up early, worked hard at their calling, were thrifty, sober, and did not engage in frivolity - and in so doing, they acquired wealth. Certain men who were called were also imbued with the correct spirit of acquisition and therefore were destined to become wealthy. Such spirit eventually became known as the **Protestant Work Ethic**.

The Reformation in England and Puritanism. In the early 16th century, England was a second-rate power torn apart of internal disunity. Religion in England was reformed not by determined spiritual idealists like Luther and Calvin, but by a determined monarch. King Henry VIII had been unable to produce a male heir to his throne by his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. When Pope Clement VII refused Henry's request for an annulment, he divorced her without papal consent in 1527 and married his mistress, Anne Boleyn. Henry then established a new protestant church - the Church of England or Anglican Church - dissolved England's monasteries, seized all church lands and sold them to powerful members of the English gentry at bargain prices, and declared himself head of the new Church of England.

Thereafter, English Protestants were divided between the followers of the new Church of England and the Puritans, the "pure" Calvinists whose "divine plan" called for reforming the evils of society and limiting Church membership to the "elite." Decades of religious strife followed, beginning with Henry's son, Edward VI (1547-1553), who became king at the age of 10 and whose Protestant regents persecuted Catholics; continuing with the reign of his stepsister, Mary (1553-1558), a staunch Catholic who executed many Protestants; and ending with the rule of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) who restored Protestantism and executed over 100 Catholic priests. Her heir, James I (1603-1625) was committed to ridding England of the Puritan threat to the Church.

Results of the Protestant Reformation.

- Religious reform shattered the unity of European Christianity which had previously been Catholic: Spain, Italy, and Ireland remained firmly Catholic; France, England, Scotland, Switzerland, and the Netherlands gained a substantial following for Calvinism; while Germany and Scandinavia became largely Lutheran.
- The competing religious loyalties that emerged resulted in brutal wars and internal uprising that wracked 16th Century Europe as Protestant and Catholic antagonists slaughtered each other in the name of Christianity.
- The legacy of religious strife intensified European interest in colonization. Many Europeans - especially the English - who embraced the new Protestant faiths - especially those with a Calvinist base - saw the "New World" as a safe haven for practicing their religion.

Goal #5: To discuss the expectations of Europeans who favored exploration to North America

At least 5 distinct groups of Europeans were interested in North America, and each had specific expectations about what they might find.

- **Monarchs** hoped to expand their domestic and international power base by acquiring new overseas possessions. Spanish most successful in these endeavors, followed by French and English.
- **Merchants** hoped to attain a great degree of commercial success. The French (fur) and Spanish (gold) merchants were especially successful in this endeavor.
- **Missionaries** hoped to save souls. The Spanish and French Catholic missionaries were especially successful in gaining converts through exploration.

- **Explorers** hoped to conquer and exploit new lands and, in the process, gain fame and wealth. Spanish and French most successful; English to a lesser degree.
 - **Spanish explorers** sought to open their own trade routes, discover vast quantities of gold, and conquer new lands for the Spanish crown and for their own personal wealth and glory. Only if a land worthy of economic exploitation was found would it be colonized. By 1609, they had gained the first European colonies in the Americas - Haiti, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and Cuba; entered Central America and conquered the Aztecs; explored Florida and Arizona; built the first continuously-occupied European fort in what became the U.S.; and established a special missionary colony in New Mexico.
 - **French explorers** sought to expand their commercial trade industry and create a monopoly of the northern fur trade through the acquisition of overseas colonies. By the early 17th Century, they had gained control over their newly-discovered St. Lawrence River and its valleys: established the first French colony in North America - Nova Scotia; founded the town of Quebec for the inception of fur traffic; and developed a strong trading system among both the Indians and the European settlers.
 - **English explorers** sought to colonize new lands and bring new wealth to England; they gained fishing grounds in Newfoundland and after 1607, colonies on the eastern seaboard of North America and in Canada.
- **Colonists** in the 16th century were of two sorts:
 - Those who chose to immigrate to the "New World" and who sought an escape from the hard realities of life in Europe and wished to create new spiritual, social, economic, and political lives and lifestyles. These colonists mainly included
 - religious dissidents - especially the Protestant sects - and
 - Peasants impoverished by the social and economic death of feudalism and who hoped to find economic freedom in North America.
 - Those who involuntarily immigrated to colonial North America. These colonists mainly included
 - criminals who were in jail and "transported" largely because they were poor and stole to feed themselves and their families, could not pay their debts, or prostituted themselves to stay alive;
 - Africans stolen from Africa for the slave trade in the Caribbean and indentured servitude in colonial North America; and
 - poor and orphaned children, as well as impoverished adults, who were "spirited" away or what became known as "kidnapping" - the practice of taking "the idle, lazy, simple people they can entice, such as have professed idleness, and will rather beg than work; who are persuaded by these Spirits, they shall goe into a place where food shall drop into their mouthes: and being thus deluded, they take courage, and are transported." (Brooks: 37-38)

Goal #6: To address the question, "why does any of this matter?"

Most of you are not history majors and you may have been wondering over the past few days, "Why does any of this matter?" There is a very easy answer for this rather complex question - because it tells us a great deal about **who we are today!!**

1. It tells us that the first waves of European immigrants to the "New World" were largely people no longer wanted or welcome in Europe - so called "disposable people" who were forced to carve out a new life in an unfriendly environment and dedicated to the idea that hard working, Protestants could, as individuals, create a better life for themselves.
2. It tells us that immigrants to America came from diverse social, religious, economic, and political backgrounds. Thus, America was never destined to become a "melting pot" where people blended together to form a common American community. Rather, thousands of individuals with different ideas about EVERYTHING settled here.
3. It tells us that those who left England to begin their lives in the "New World" had similar objectives - to escape hardships, achieve economic betterment, find some sort of political, economic, and religious freedom - but they had very different backgrounds and very different ideas of how to achieve their objectives.
4. It tells us that the ideas we had at the beginning of this course about how and why the earliest European Americans came to America were rather simplistic. Instead, learning more details about who the Europeans were and why they came to North America helps us better understand our major course theme - **American history is full of controversy, conflict, and compromise** - as well as five other of our course themes:
 - Freedom is never free.
 - Ordinary and extraordinary people make history.
 - The diverse nature of American society makes us unique among nations.
 - Dissent and protest are essential ingredients of American history.
 - Progress is not always progressive

Conclusions

"The Europeans - Why They Left"

1. By the late 15th century, the English King, as well as his nobles and knights, were less interested in the old feudal relationships whereby land and agriculture were the heart and soul of the economy. Instead, a whole new economic system developed around capital and commercialism. What resulted was a profound economic transformation whereby the King allowed his nobles and knights to convert their lands and **lease** them for "improvement" so that they could use the profits from the new leases to finance commercial, industrial, and colonial ventures.
2. The consequences of this economic transformation were dramatic: the landlords', knights', and peasants' relationship to the land dramatically changed; the land itself was physically altered through various economic "improvements;" a new "permanent proletariat" of landless laborers arose in England; mercantilism became the economic foundation of the English economy; and social, political, and economic inequality greatly increased. In short, the social, political, and economic lives of the vast majority of English men and women were dramatically changed by the end of feudalism and the origin of mercantilism.
3. Life in 14th, 15th, and 16th Century Europe was characterized by a social, political, and economic inequality; a fragile good supply and famine; poor health and living conditions; an uncertain economy; overpopulation; dangerous standards of living; child victimization; intolerance of those who were different; religious strife; and warfare.
4. The legacy of religious strife intensified European interest in colonization. Many Europeans - especially the English - who embraced the new Protestant faiths - especially those with a Calvinist base - saw the "New World" as a safe haven for practicing their religion.
5. The 16th century colonists to the "New World" were of two sorts: those who chose to immigrate to the "New World" and who sought an escape from the hard realities of life in Europe and wished to create new spiritual, social, economic, and political lives and lifestyles and those who involuntarily immigrated to colonial North America. The resulting religious, economic, social, and political diversity of these immigrants, it is clear that early America was not a "melting pot".